

THE EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
August 17, 2004

The regular meeting of the Edgefield County Council was held at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, August 17, 2004, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

Members present:

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present:

Wayne Adams, County Administrator
John Byrd, County Attorney
Barbara Stark, Clerk to Council
and others as per list attached

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and Councilman Hudson gave the invocation. After the invocation was given, the Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

Minutes

A motion to accept the July 6, 2004, Edgefield County Council Minutes was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Chairman Kneece congratulated the Administrator for his appointment by the SCAC President, to serve on the Land Use, Natural Resources and Transportation Steering Committee, as stated in Report Number 3.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held at this time to receive comments from the public on Ordinance No. 03-04-447, "An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 97-98-363 for the Purpose of Adopting Revisions to the Edgefield County Comprehensive Plan.". There were no comments, written or oral, from the public.

Ordinances

Third reading of Ordinance No. 03-04-447, "An Ordinance Amending Ordinance Number 97-98-363 for the Purpose of Adopting Revisions to the Edgefield County Comprehensive Plan" was approved unanimously by council with the motion to approve the third reading made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens.

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Councilman Kitchens made the motion to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 03-04-488, "An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2004, or Such Other Appropriate Series Designation, of Edgefield County, SC, in the Principal Amount of Not Exceeding \$208,000.00." The motion was seconded by Councilman Bright and carried unanimously by council.

New Business

Arlene Traxler, Edgefield County Treasurer, addressed Council concerning the need of a payment drop security cabinet to be utilized by the offices of the Treasurer, Clerk of Court, and Magistrate. The Tax Collector will also use the drop box for delinquent collections. The Treasurer stated that the offices have been asked, do you have a box we could drop a payment in before or after hours?

In the exhibit the Treasurer had for each councilman there were different types of boxes: (1) wall mount (2) door installed (3) drive-up (4) walk-up on concrete or in ground. There are two walk-up models, a 400 model and a 500 model. The Treasurer's suggestion was a walk-up on concrete (model 400). The proposed site would be between the courthouse and the Auditor's office. The company said they would drill a hole about the size of a quarter, and it will bolt down into the concrete to secure the cabinet, and stainless steel would be made on to that. If the box is ever removed, the company will come in cut the bolts off even with the concrete and repair the holes. There is the option of either purchasing or leasing. All of the department heads were in favor of leasing for a year. For leasing, the model 500 is suggested by the company. It is a slightly larger box and there isn't much difference in the price. The price does include installation. Lease price per month would be \$35.00. A qualified locksmith will have to install the box with directions from American Security Cabinets. We would be charged monthly but billed quarterly. After a year of leasing there is the option of purchasing the cabinet with a discount. Mrs. Traxler's suggestion on using the walk-up concrete model was because, with the courthouse being a historical building, you would not want to drill into it. The door drop has not been satisfactory to other county offices using that system and she stated that after looking at the courthouse door the box would protrude. As far as the walk-up, tentatively looking at where the light is on the sidewalk. There would be light and would be visible and accessible. Handicap could get to it. She would also like for council to look at the site.

There would be generic envelope with a place to be checked for the designated office. It would be opened under dual control which would require a person from each respective office to open the box. When the box is opened the envelopes would be distributed to the appropriate office. Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to lease the 500-OC. Motion carried unanimously.

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Councilman Kitchens asked the Treasurer if her office was accepting payments electronically. She stated there is a link on the county's web page where taxes can be paid by credit card, and you can also pay them by a debit card. You cannot pay taxes with either of these cards through the window in the office. The Treasurer said she checked with the financial institution; anyway you tried there was a cost. There was a fixed cost – the county would be charged every month if there was one payment or a hundred. Of course, we do not want a cost to the county. With the link on the web page, payments can be accepted through Official Payments Corporation. No cost to the county at all, but there is a cost to the taxpayer. Vehicle taxes can now be paid through this link also. The next day, by e-mail, they fax to us everybody that has paid by credit card. The money comes directly to the Treasurer's account within twenty four hours. When the office has verified the money is in the account, the taxpayer is sent a receipt. The fee is charged according to the amount of the individual's taxes.

Ms. Betty Jean Edwards addressed Council requesting county support for the summer basketball program held at JET, Riverside (Saluda), and the Edgefield Gym. It was a very successful program but short of funds. Ms. Edwards asked for any financial help for next year that Council could offer. Chairman Kneece asked why not work this program into the county's recreation program. But Councilman Dorn was not in agreement. Mr. Kneece suggested setting up a separate program, like football and the other sports, for basketball. All of these leagues are under the county program. Mr. Adams mentioned the county basketball program in February and March as to how Ms. Edwards' program could be combined with that one. These are questions that need to be analyzed during the budget process to decide exactly what is wanted and what council is willing to fund – would allow for some planning as well. Councilman Dorn made the motion to receive this request as information and try to come up with a suitable program.

Council was in receipt of a request for financial support for the Edgefield County Veterans Day Celebration to be held November 6, 2004. Council donated \$1,500 in 2001 and in 2003. Motion was made by Councilman Kneece, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to approve a donation of \$1,000 for the Veterans Day Celebration. Motion carried unanimously.

Appointments to the Recreation Commission were discussed at this time. Council originally appointed Councilmen Kitchens and Dorn to represent them on the Recreation Commission. The Commission was set up for staggered terms, meaning that of the first appointments one of the appointees had to be for a one year term and the other for a two year term. Council never actually designated which would be for a one year term. That is the one who needs to be appointed at this time. Motion was made by Chairman Kneece to appoint Councilman Kitchens to serve a new two-year term. Councilman Dorn's seat will be up for reappointment next year. Motion carried unanimously.

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Mr. Roy Blackwell was not present concerning the council's decision to support the theatre project. Mr. Blackwell has filed a lawsuit challenging actions taken by council concerning this project. Attorney Byrd asked to be heard. Mr. Byrd stated just for information purposes. "Since our last council meeting (July 6th) and in the last few days, Mr. Blackwell acting *Pro Se* (on his own behalf, without an attorney), has brought a lawsuit against Edgefield County. At this time, because we will have to defend that suit, and the proper forum for discussing this matter would be in the courts and not at a council meeting, my suggestion and recommendation is that this matter be held in - abeyance, because it has just begun and we have responses and procedures that have to be followed.

Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to use the same funding as previous years for the distribution of PARD funding for FY 2005. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

A written request was brought before council from Mrs. Diane Murrell, Principal of W. E. Parker, at the July 6th council meeting, for a funding match of \$1,000 from the County for the AmeriCorp program. This request was received as information at that time to be brought back before Council at its August meeting.

Mr. Arthur Northrop, Assistant Principal of W. E. Parker, addressed Council at the August 17th meeting concerning this request. Mr. Northrop stated that about two years ago W. E. Parker applied for and received an AmeriCorp grant. AmeriCorp had been in the county before during the implementation of the 911 program. This particular grant was written in a different way for a different purpose. With this grant, tutors have been provided in the elementary schools, but another thing young people have done is replace street signs that have been damaged, etc. They have worked over two hundred hours in replacing signs under the supervision of the county.

What is required to receive the grant, or keep the grant, is that W. E. Parker has to come up with \$7,500. In this process the money used has come out of the school's budget, not the district budget. The money has come from the canteen, picture money, and PTA. In addition, the other organizations that have participated and used AmeriCorp workers are Health Dept. (gave some funds this past year), Johnston Elementary and JET. We are faced again this year in coming up with that money. What this provides in a direct impact for Edgefield County is the living allowances that these AmeriCorp members receive. There are thirty (30) members this year and that is \$100,000.00. That is how much federal money is coming into Edgefield County. The majority of these folks are high school seniors or college students. In addition to the living allowance, once they complete a year of service they receive an educational grant that ranges from \$1,250 to about \$2,500.00. There have been about thirty five (35) to this date that have been able to

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continue their education, plus the direct economic impact of \$200,000 coming into Edgefield County. We have two young men already lined up to replace street signs for this next year and we certainly could use a little help for the year coming up. This is the third year of the AmeriCorp program, and the indication that we are getting from Columbia is that as long as we keep operating the way we have in terms of the paper work and the fiscal responsibility, this could go on at least another two years after this year.

Councilman Dorn wanted to know how the participants are selected. Mr. Northrop said there is an application process that has been publicized in the local schools and in the community as well. Ads have also been in the local paper. Basically they go through an interview process and Mrs. Murrell (Principal) and Mrs. Armstrong (Program Director) interview the candidates. Then, there is also a component that is passed down from the federal level that says they have to pass a basic skills test. What is being implemented this next year is that they will actually have to go through the Para Pro program – teachers are involved in this program now which would help them in the long run because there is a shortage of Para Pros. That is additional training for these people.

Councilman Kitchens wanted to know how much time they spend putting up signs. Arthur said over the past two years they have performed over two hundred (200) hours (4 workers total). Mr. Adams had asked the 911 director about the number of hours the AmeriCorp workers put in and she said they had worked 40 -50 hours each and put up 36 signs. In addition these young people have worked at the festivals: Heritage Festival, Peach Festival, Trenton Haunted House.

Councilman Hudson made the motion to contribute \$1,000 to W. E. Parker AmeriCorp program as a grant match. Motion seconded by Councilman Dorn. Motion carried unanimously.

Guests

On behalf of the Antioch Baptist Church, Mr. Pee Wee Padgett addressed Council concerning a new building being constructed at the church. “Around the new building is a state owned road, SR-19-270, that the members of the church asked the SC Highway Department to return to the church. He stated that the church would then be responsible for maintenance of the road. The Highway Dept. rejected the request, stating that road could only be turned over to a county, city, or school district. The church would be very appreciative if Edgefield County would request that SR-19-270 be given to the county, who in turn would transfer the road to Antioch Church by whatever means would be necessary.” The road goes around the church from Highway 23 around to the road on the other side of the church. No one else uses it. The motion was made by Councilman Bright to accept the state owned road, SR-19-270, from the SC Highway Department, and Antioch Baptist Church agrees in writing to petition the court to close the road and return

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it to them, and provided there is no maintenance required of the county. Motion seconded by Councilman Hudson, and carried unanimously.

Rick Greene, Upper Savannah COG, was present. Mr. Dorn asked the status of the water line on 283. Rick said he though everything was finished. He had talked with Ruth LaForge that morning and she said there was one more payment to be processed.

No executive session.

Claims approved as follows:

- A. PAYROLL: 6/21/04 thru 7/4/04
- Regular.....\$169,318.04
- PAYROLL: 7/5/04 thru 7/18/04
- Regular.....\$175,501.61
- B. General Operating.....\$1,124,200.12

There being no further business, Councilman made the motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting of Council will be held Tuesday, September 7, 2004, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter St., Edgefield.

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Council

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

